

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 13, 2011
Berkeley, California

PRESS CONTACT: Patrick Sheahan
510.333.7575

Citizens' Groups Sue Berkeley Over West Berkeley Project

On May 11 two citizens' groups sued the City of Berkeley over proposed zoning that would radically restructure West Berkeley. The Sustainable West Berkeley Alliance (SWBA), an organization of Berkeley residents and businesses, and the Council of Neighborhood Associations (CNA) filed their suit in Alameda County Superior Court under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

At the heart of the issue are impacts from development standards for proposed Master Use Permit (MUP) sites, which would be large developments of more than four acres, or a full city block. The City proposes allowing up to 80 acres for MUP development with buildings 75 feet high. The current height limit is 45 feet. SWBA and CNA believe the rezoning favors large development interests without balancing the interests of residents, existing businesses, and the environment.

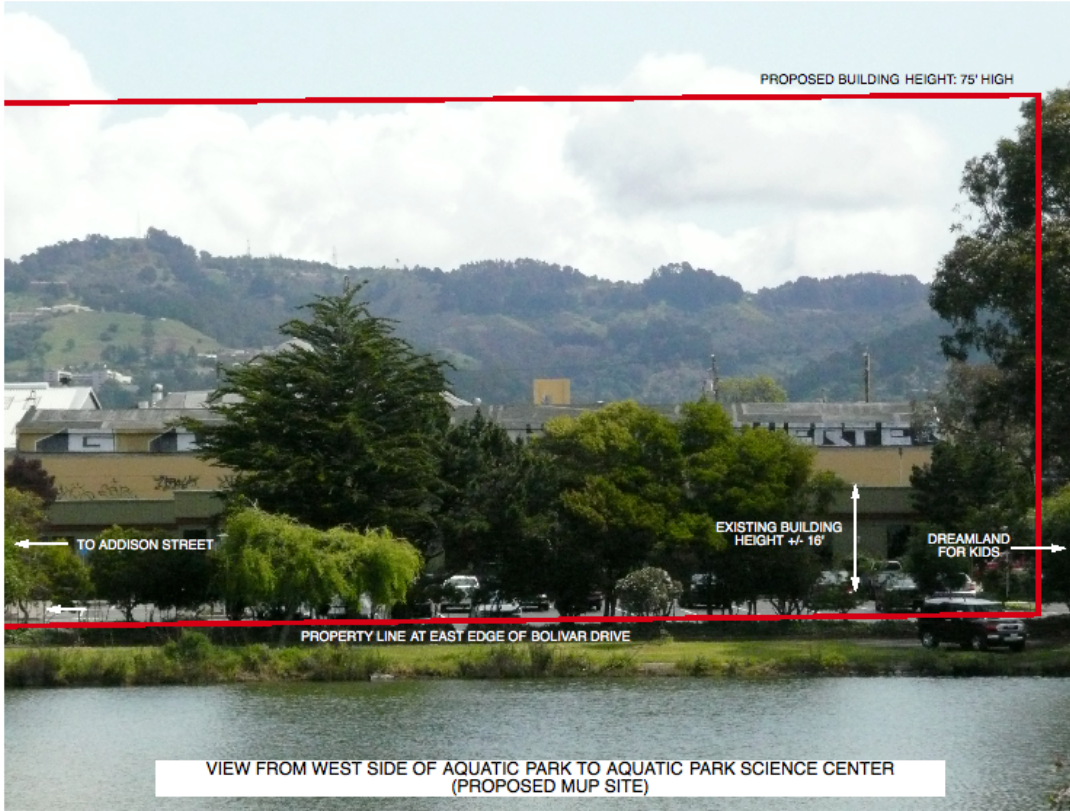
In the lawsuit, SWBA and CNA make three principal charges:

First, the City's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) failed to study the effects of allowing proposed MUP sites to occupy properties zoned Mixed-Use Residential. An MUP site would be allowed to locate potentially incompatible uses and 75-foot-high buildings next to homes and apartments.

Second, the EIR fails to identify and evaluate what actions would be taken to mitigate the impact of big buildings' shadows on public open space and recreational areas, especially Aquatic Park.

Third, the EIR fails to evaluate the effects of proposed development on the environmental resources of Aquatic Park and the impacts on biological resources, hydrology, and water quality.

The intent of the SWBA and CNA action is to encourage the City of Berkeley to shape the rezoning to promote appropriate and sustainable development that adequately protects local residents, businesses and the environment.



PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT: 75' HIGH

← TO ADDISON STREET

EXISTING BUILDING
HEIGHT +/- 16'

DREAMLAND
FOR KIDS →

PROPERTY LINE AT EAST EDGE OF BOLMAR DRIVE

VIEW FROM WEST SIDE OF AQUATIC PARK TO AQUATIC PARK SCIENCE CENTER
(PROPOSED MUP SITE)